

Emerson Port of Entry Blockade February 9th – 16th, 2022



D Div Tactical Troop Training
May 3rd – 6th, 2022

Emerson POE Blockade

- 2022-02-09 Freedom Rally organizers advised Morris/Emerson Detachment they were going to be conducting a slow roll protest in the area of the Emerson POE that evening.
- Detachment resources monitoring the area reported approximately 20 – 30 vehicles involved.
- The vehicles included semi-trailers, large tractors, pick up trucks, and light vehicles.
- The group would travel from the POE north for approximately 10 kilometers and loop back around.

Emerson POE Blockade

- At approximately 2315 hours the group stopped their vehicles in front of the Emerson POE, blocking traffic in both directions.
- The group started to assemble a permanent blockade which included large vehicles, farm machinery, and Atco type trailers



Emerson POE Blockade

Day 1 (Feb 10)

- 2022-02-10 Morris Detachment Commander attended the scene early in the morning, and confirmed the blockade has stopped traffic in both directions.
- There are approximately 50 vehicles involved, with several tractor-trailers, farm implements, tractors, bobcats, snowmobiles, passenger trucks, and camper trailers.
- We were unable to identify an on-site spokesperson for the group, but were provided contact information for the group's lawyer.
- Efforts to establish communication with the group continued.

Emerson POE Blockade Day 1 (Feb 10)



Emerson POE Blockade

Day 1 (Feb 10) continued

- Communication was established with CBSA and the US Border Patrol.
- Daily SIT REP meetings were set with management from all three services.
- CBSA, in conjunction with USBP re-directed all traffic to alternate POE's.
- MIT was updated of the blockade, and signage was placed to divert traffic in the area

Emerson POE Blockade

Day 1 (Feb 10) continued

- Command structure established
 - Criminal Operations Officer
 - Incident Commander - East District Operations Officer
 - On-sight Commander - Detachment Commander
 - Logistics and File manager – Detachment NCO
- Support Services were engaged, including DCAS, STRAT COMS, Traffic Services, RPAS, MCS/CREST, FSOC, and TSG.
- Divisional Liaison Officers were dispatched to the POE, reporting to the On-sight Commander.
- Scheduled 24 hour resources were put in place to ensure public safety.

Emerson POE Blockade

Day 1 (Feb 10) continued

- Operational Plan established, with contingencies for potential escalation:
 - The RCMP would maintain an operationally prepared status and use a measured response consistent with the behavior and management of the demonstrators.
 - The measured response will be in consultation with the District Commander, DEOC, or the designated CIC.
 - The RCMP will maintain local dialog with event organizers in an attempt to gain information related to any changes in itinerary or possible support groups joining the blockade.

Divisional Liaison Team

- Upon arrival, initiate dialogue with identified leaders;
- Advise organizers of potential civil and criminal liability of blocking traffic, safety of motorists and protestors is our main priority.
- DLT members will be mindful of such variables as officer safety, safety of the public, potential for increased violence, and seriousness of the offence, however, enforcement of any nature should be the role of a uniformed police officer, and not of the DLT member.

ENFORCEMENT

- Enforcement will need to be authorized by the Critical Incident Commander, District Commander, or Criminal Operations Officer.
- Consider all relevant circumstances to determine the level of police response to the blockade/protest and applicable offences under Canadian law.
- Factors to consider will include: public and police safety; size, attitude, and make-up of the crowd, as well as the consequences of taking action against violators versus inaction.
- Ensure any enforcement action is measured, where possible attempt to negotiate compliance before taking enforcement action.

IMMEDIATE ACTION PLAN:

- Enforcement action may include the following:
- District Commander
 - District response will be limited to immediate action to active or imminent threats when urgency dictates immediate response prior to arrival of support units.
- Tactical Support Group.
- Full CIC engagement.
- Should enforcement action be required, the District Commander will ensure appropriate situational reports/briefings are provided to CROPS, and the Commanding Officer of “D” Division.

Crown Consultation – Applicable Charges

Provincial

- **The relevant Highway Traffic Act (HTA)**
- Section 76 of the HTA gives police officers the power to direct the protestors to move their vehicles off the highway. Failure to follow such a direction is an offence, for which you may issue a ticket;
- Section 222 of the HTA gives police officers the ability to ticket the protestors for illegally parking on the highway;
- Section 140 of the HTA gives police officers the ability to ticket the protestors for obstructing the highway as pedestrians;
- Section 243 of the HTA gives police officers the ability to tow the

Crown Consultation – Applicable Charges

Criminal Code

Criminal Code (CC) sections are fairly straightforward:

- Section 430 of the CC gives police officers the power to arrest and charge the protestors with committing criminal mischief to property, to wit, the highway.

There is ample case law to support the position that it is illegal for a protestor to block a highway, even if they are doing so in an effort to raise an issue they consider important.

- Section 423(e) of the CC (Intimidation), the offence can be committed by blocking or obstructing a highway.

Camper trailers and ATCO buildings

- The Crown was consulted, and advised we were to treat all camper trailers and ATCO trailers as a dwelling .
- We now had to prepare warrants if we wanted to enter these units.
- The plan was to take control of the situation, secure the dwelling units, and prepare warrants to enter.

This task would fall onto the GIS/CREST units included in the OPS Plan.

Emerson POE Blockade

Day 2 (Feb 11)

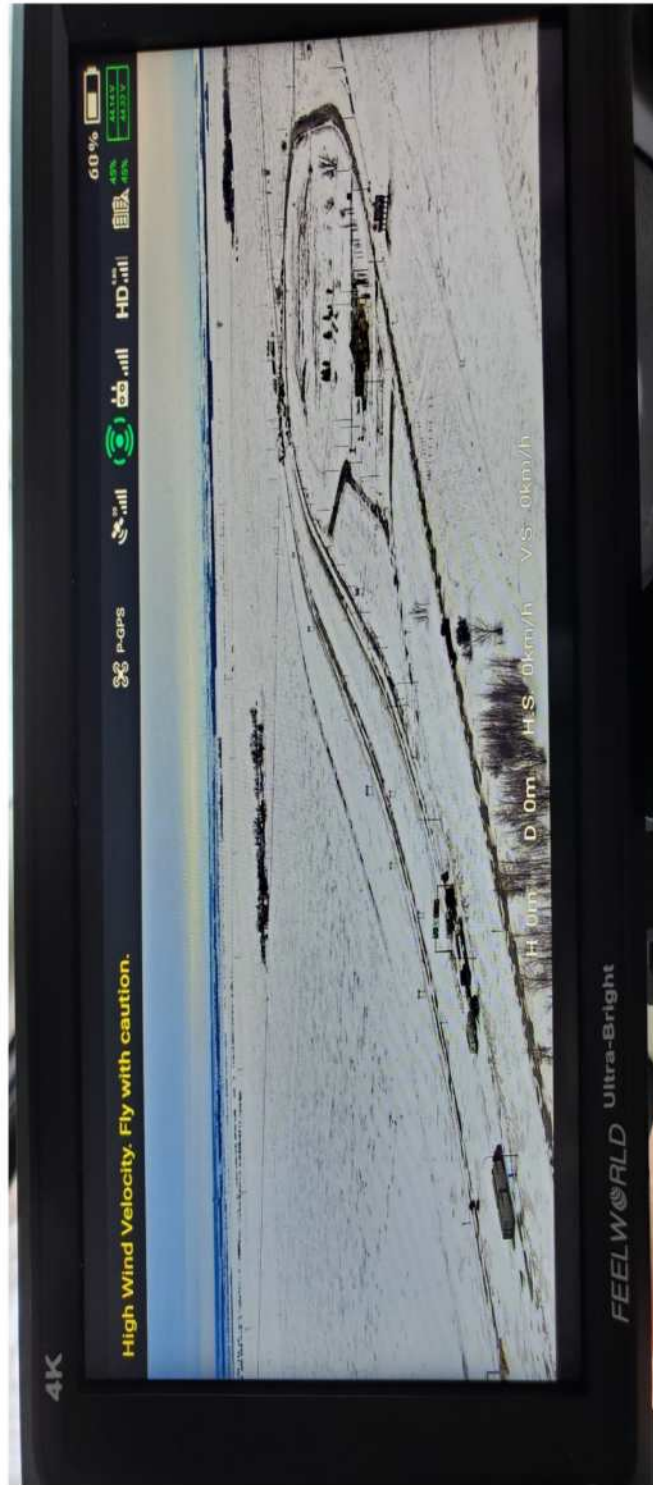
- For many of the protest group, English was not their first language. To mitigate this risk, I Facilitated a HRMIS search for Russian, Ukrainian, and German speaking members.
- I Contacted Transport Canada, and initiated the process for restricting airspace over the area.
- I Requested IBET conduct covert monitoring of all ports of entry throughout the night, and provided daily updates to CBSA/USBP.
- DLT continued local communication.

Emerson POE Blockade

Day 3 (Feb 12)

- An additional (20 +) supporters arrived on scene. These supporters were only on scene for the day. No issues or concerns identified.
- Ongoing enforcement planning continued.
- RPAS photographs and on-site observations confirm two separate locations where the protestors have set up.
 - Location 1 (L1)
Provincial Trunk Highway (PTH) #75 and Provincial Road (PR) #243
 - Location 2 (L2)
Provincial Trunk Highway (PTH) #75 near the Information Center

Overview



Emerson POE Blockade

Day 4 (Feb 13) Tactical Planning

- Tactical planning session at HQ with CIC, and TSG.
- Approximate number of members required

91

- CIC – 2 IC and Scribe
- TSG – 24
 - L1 (16 members - T/L Sgt. Binda)
 - L2 (8 members – T/L Sgt. Carr)
- ERT – s.37
- PDS – 2

General Duty resources

- Traffic Services – 8 (Checkpoints)
- GD - 13 (Arrest / Support / Checkpoint / Cell Block - CBSA)
- Containment – 6 members (Checkpoints - MND / MWD / MED)
- Arrest - MWD and MED CREST – 6
- MWD GIS – 3 (Cell Block – Emerson, Morris)
- DLT – 4
- RPAS – 2
- FIS – 2
- IBET – 6 (2 monitor POE's and 4 snowmobiles)
- De-mobilization – 3 members/reservists to operate heavy equipment

Operational Equipment

- Command Post for CIC
- TSG equipment truck.
- TAV, will be situated behind TSG line at L1 (lethal over-watch)
- CLU van positioned in close proximity for prisoner transport.
- Passenger buses at L1
- Marked police vehicles.

Arrest Teams

- Arrest teams / CLU staged on PTH #75 to facilitate transport of prisoners.
- Arrest Team Leader will brief with all arrest teams regarding applicable lawful authorities and legislation
- Arrest Team Leader will direct operations on-site.
- Four arrest teams will be in place
 - AT1 - MED CREST – 2 members
 - AT2 - MWD CREST – 2 members
 - AT3 – MWD Crest / MED Crest – 2 members
 - AT4 – 2 GD Members

Prisoner Processing

- 3 Portage GIS (MWD) and 2 GD resources will be posted at the Emerson Detachment, POE CBSA Emerson and Morris detachments to facilitate lodging and access to counsel.
- Guards will be arranged through the detachment as needed.

German speaking members available for arresting/processing members to facilitate communication as necessary.

Removal of Assets

- Semi / Highway Tractors
 - Qualified Class 1 operators
 - Towing /Wreckers
 - City of Winnipeg Transit
- Farm Tractors / Implements
 - Operate them off site using qualified members
 - Pull them off site – Dozers

Equipment will be seized under lawful authority and secured at a secure compound (temporary location at CBSA).

Emerson POE Blockade

Day 5 (Feb 14)

- DLT has engaged the designated spokesperson and the group itself explaining this gathering is an unlawful protest.
- Police have further explained the participants are subject to fines and charges under the Highway Traffic Act (HTA) and Criminal Code of Canada (CC).
- Despite law enforcement action and continuous dialogue, a group of protestors remain situated at the junction of Provincial Trunk Highway (PTH) #75 and Provincial Road (PR) #243 known as L1.

Location 1



Emerson POE Blockade

Day 6 (Feb 15)

•Warning letter drafted in consultation with Strategic Communications.

Participating in lawful protests is a fundamental right in Canada, however, this is an unlawful blockade.

Under provincial and federal legislation, you will face severe penalties if you do not cease further unlawful activity and remove your vehicle and/or property immediately from the blockade.

You may be arrested and charged with criminal offences including but not limited to:

- Mischief, Intimidation, and Obstructing police efforts

Being convicted of these charges come with serious consequences:

- Jail time, fines in the thousands of dollars, forfeiture of

Emerson POE Blockade

Day 6 (Feb 15) continued

- Protestors advised DLT/On-site commander that given the Provinces announcement/calendar showing when and how COVID mandates would scale down, they planned to leave the next day at noon.
 - Given this information, I did not disseminate the warning letter of increased enforcement.
- MIT Snow removal equipment arranged for noon Feb 16.
- CBSA/USBP advised of pending dismantle
- Protestors initiated the breakdown of camp, bringing in specialized equipment to assist with starting vehicles.
- Vehicles were observed moving into position for departure.

Contingency plan using on-site resources developed to deal with any individual protestors remaining.

Emerson POE Blockade

Day 6 (Feb 15) continued

- CIC engaged, with planned takedown on February 17 should protestors/blockade remain in place.
- **TSG call-out initiated.**
- CIC/Tactical Briefing scheduled for February 17
 - 0400 - Operational Briefing – 1560 Seel Avenue, Winnipeg, MB
 - 0500 – Depart Seel Avenue – OC – Command Post staged at Emerson Detachment
 - 0630 – Action on
- RPAS will conduct final Aerial photographs of L1 on Feb 16

Perimeter Checkpoints will be established at 0615 at the following locations:

- Check Point #1 - North Access - PR 421 and PTH #75 – 4 GD members
- Check Point #2 - West Access – PR 243 and PTH #75 – 2 GD members and 2 Containment resources
- Check Point #3 - 1 Mile north of L1 located @ Grid Road and PTH #75 – 4 Traffic members and 4 containment members (cover both north and south traffic on #75)
- South Access – POE
- Check Point #4 - East Access – PR 200 into Emerson, MB – 4 Traffic Resources

TSG

- **24 TSG resources**

- Form a line across both north and southbound lanes of PTH #75 on the north side of the tractors at L1.
- TSG resources will park on the shoulder of PTH #75
- TSG Resources will be equipped in Tac Order of Dress Level II – Combat pants and dark blue shirts, duty belt, gas mask and winter order of dress, toques and masks/balaclavas

- **ERT and PDS Resources**

- ERT and PDS will support TSG resources and provide lethal over-watch
- TAV situated behind TSG at L1 for over-watch
- EMRT will be ERT resources
- Upon command from CLC, TSG (arrest teams) will move south securing any remaining protestors in the area.
- Prisoner processing plan will be followed

Site Image Feb 15.



Emerson POE Blockade Day 7 (Feb 16)



Emerson POE Blockade

Day 6 (Feb 15) continued

- Attended Emerson Blockade, met with Media, DLT, and on-site commander.
 - The protestors had already staged all equipment running and ready to depart in the northbound lanes at the main blockade.
- 1200 RCMP escorted the convoy safely out of the area.
- No protestors remained behind.
- MIT cleared all snow from the roadways.
- 1300 highways re-opened in both directions.
- CBSA/USBP re-opened POEs.
- No arrests were made, and there were no injuries or property damage.

Significant Challenges

- Resources for an extended period of time.
- Weather (severe weather conditions, cold and snow)
- Communication
 - Internal and external
- Securing resources for removal of heavy equipment.
- Location
 - Accommodations, food, etc.
 - Cell/radio coverage
 - Cover/Concealment for tactical response
- Social Media, Political environment, public protestor support, legal powers/authorities, i.e. Emergency Measures Act.
- Call for action